4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11



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When a chief dies the son chosen by the chief succeeds him; the successor is chosen as a rule some years before the chief dies. The successor will however divide the private property of his father with his brothers like anyone else.

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*Beliefs.*—They call the Divinity by the name Chieng, which is the sun; when a man comes out of his house in the morning he spits to the east and in the evening he expectorates to the west. If the sunset is extremely red it is said to be a sign that an important man will die in the tribe. They believe that the spirit of a man goes upwards at death.

If a hailstorm occurs no one goes to work in the fields on the following day.

Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war.

[pp. 36-51 not processed]

795 Lastly, my followers must immediately slaughter all their cattle, sheep, and goats. When this is done, I will provide them with as many more as they want from the Lake." Having said this, the snake disappeared into the lake.

Onyango soon began spreading his gospel and, as was natural with so attractive a programme, it was not long before he had a considerable following. They were divided into what may be described as two Degrees. The First Degree consisted of those personally "called" [786] in very much the same way as Onyango had been "called." They were all men, mostly older men and the heads of Bomas. The "call" consisted in their throwing some kind of fit, possibly an ecstacy of religious exaltation, during which words poured from them in an un- [791] intelligible torrent. They became the priests and were in tremendous demand as witch-doctors since they soon were invested with, or themselves assumed supernatural powers.

761 For example, they were reputed to be able to recall to life a dying 795 person or one who had just died. The procedure here began with the priest's acceptance of a goat as his fee. The patient, or corpse was stretched on the ground and lightly covered with freshly cut grass, some of which was twisted into a thick rope round the neck. This rope was called "Buombwe."

The goat was next sacrificed and its blood sprinkled over the grass, the while the priest called loudly on Mumbo to save the dying man or to restore to life the corpse—as the case might be, generally with but indifferent success.

795 The Second Degree consisted of all the dependants, male and female, of those especially "Called" by Mumbo himself, and also any other people who, although not specifically "Called," chose to join the cult.

795 At sunrise and at sunset all Mumboites stand facing the sun with the first finger and thumb of each hand meeting to form a circle and ● 788 held up to the eyes like binoculars. Having gazed at the sun intensely until they are completely dazzled, they stretch out their arms towards 782 it and break into rapid and often unintelligible prayer. This is interesting in that the ancient Luo religion was—and in places still is—that of sun worship. Occasionally when they feel like it they also pray thus to the Lake, and even, it is said, sacrifice cattle, throwing the meat into the Lake to the crocodiles.

795 As was to be expected from a retrogressive religion which not only 782 encouraged but ordained idleness and uncleanliness, it was not long before its adherents, having nothing to do or to think about, began to 839 indulge in unpleasant practices which the normal Jaluo, however uncivilised he might be, held in abhorrence. The communal enjoyment of women, including incest, bhang smoking, sodomy, and even bestiality, all made their appearance, though these practices seem to

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11



husband and runs away, the amount which he has already paid on her behalf is returned and the marriage is broken off. If a woman finds herself unmarried after a long period, it is customary for her to go to a chief or a rich man and state that she has come to stay and cook for him. In such case she is usually taken to wife, but a very small complimentary present is paid for her. Chiefs may have from ten to forty wives. The Ja-luo are, generally speaking, very moral. They do not intermarry in

436. REPTILE TRAPS (Ja-luo)

the same clan, but a man may marry the daughter of one who bears the same name as himself.

The Ja-luo believe in a *supreme God* whom they call "Chieng." This, however, is the same name as the sun. When a man comes out of his house in the morning, he spits towards the east, and in the evening he spits towards the west. If the sunset is extremely red, it is said to indicate the approaching death of an important person. They believe that after death the spirits of the departed go up to the sky. If a hailstorm occurs, no one goes to work in the fields on the following day. Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war. They believe that people can be killed by *witchcraft*, and that a wizard has only to show "medicine" to a person

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11



765 a dead person shave their heads for three days after the death. The eldest son of the deceased sits on a stool outside the village, and has his head shaved. If any one of importance dies, the neighbours do not
766 cultivate for three days after the death. If a big chief dies, all the surrounding people collect at the village, and in such cases even hostilities between clans are suspended, and all join in the funeral rites of the late chief, even if he happens to be at war with some of his dependent clans. In the case of the death of a chief, a new hut is built. The grave of the chief is dug by his brother. A new ox hide is placed at the bottom of the grave, and the head of the corpse is covered with a water-pot. Seeds of every kind of grain grown in the vicinity are put into the grave, but sweet potatoes are excluded. The people dance and drink "tembo" for ten days, and slaughter many oxen. The men wail for ten days, but the women wail every morning for a year. No one cultivates the fields for ten days.

428 When a man dies, his *property* goes to the brother, if the children are small. If the eldest son is grown up, he takes the property and gives his brothers a share, but a man is not allowed to take the amount paid by any one who marries one of his sisters. This marriage payment goes to
[58] the deceased father's brothers. The brothers of the deceased take his wives,
[622] but the eldest son probably takes the youngest wife of his deceased father. When a chief dies, the son whom he has chosen succeeds him. This successor is chosen really some years before the chief dies. The successor divides the private property of the chief with his brothers.

727 When a warrior *has killed a man in warfare*, he must (besides
782 shaving his head) catch a fowl and hang it round his neck head uppermost. He must not enter his home village until this has been done. Whilst the fowl is suspended to the man's neck by the beak its head is severed from the body, and the head is left hanging from the man's neck. The warrior then enters the village and shortly afterwards prepares a big feast to propitiate the man he has killed, so that his ghost may not give
● 788 trouble. If a house is struck by *lightning*, and any one is killed inside, the head-man of the village must obtain a male fowl of a red colour and walk round the house holding up the fowl three times. The house is then broken up, and the wood is used for other purposes. When desiring
728 *to make peace* with another tribe with whom they have been at war, they kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar such as is used for crushing grain. The representatives of each side then take out pieces of the flesh and exchange them reciprocally. An old man belonging to the side which has been worsted, and which is suing for peace, must
[234] then go to the head village of the conqueror and proceed to sweep up the cattle kraal. This is accepted as a kind of submission.

145 Like the Bantu Kavirondo, the Ja-luo are in the main a *healthy people*.